

Center for Health & Rehabilitation

March 1, 2023

Written testimony of Karen H Chadderton, Administrator, of The Pines at Bristol,. Concerning Skilled Nursing Facility Funding For SFY 2024 and SFY 2025

Members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Karen Chadderton. I am the Administrator at The Pines at Bristol a skilled nursing facility in Bristol, Connecticut. The Pines has been providing nursing home care in our community for 50 years. We are a 132 bed nursing home, and we have 175 employee working at our facility, and we are members of the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities (CAHCF).

Now three years into this unrelenting COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency and I can say that our nursing home, the residents we serve, and our employees, continue to be challenged like in no other time in our history of providing services in Connecticut. I can *also* say that our nursing home is as determined as ever, and we feel that each week we are getting closer to a time when we can say the pandemic is behind us.

We have never before experienced inflation and the ongoing staffing crisis are the top issues that are not addressed in the budget recommendation.

Inflation. We are losing ground

Staffing Crisis. The severe staffing shortages our nursing home have faced during the pandemic is not letting up. Here is what is happening. Currently we struggle every day to meet the staffing needs of our facilities. Most facilities invest almost every day in supplementing staff with overtime and expensive, non-committed, agency personnel. I have run ads for staff daily for months, especially for certified nursing assistants and nurses and I get little or no response. The staff that have sacrificed for years under COVID, many themselves contacting it, that have worked hard to meet the needs of our residents on a daily basis are starting to burn out and leave the jobs, the residents and the teams, they used to love. The staff that we are able to find only fill the current openings and many of these are new to the role. They find themselves overwhelmed with the job or they are not suited for the job, and leave shortly after hire. We have increased salaries, we have enhanced benefits and still the ability to recruit is weak with no interest in our jobs. Our skilled nursing facility needs more resources to boost the pay of our extraordinary employees, but the proposed budget doesn't address this issue.

The resources the state legislature previously provided us to boost staff pay has made all the difference over the last two years, but our employees are losing ground against inflation, just as we are. More funding is needed in the budget to address the unbelieve inflation we are facing and to help us with our soaring labor costs.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Karen H. Chadderton